Business Plan 2007-2008

Equality, Equity and

Inclusion for Women

Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women

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PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

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Message from the President

April 1, 2007

On behalf of the members of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, I am pleased to submit our Business Plan for 2007-2008.

This Business Plan was prepared in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act* provisions for a Category 2 Government entity. As such, our plan focuses on the processes necessary to advance the equality of women. It reflects a one-year transitional period for the Council as we prepare for the development of our three-year planning cycle beginning in 2008.

The progress and achievements of this plan will be provided in our 2007-2008 Annual Report, including an explanation of any variances which might occur during the year.

In preparing this plan, careful consideration was given to the strategic directions identified by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in Appendix B.

As President/CEO, my signature indicates that this plan was developed by the members of the Advisory Council and that we are accountable for achieving the identified goals and objectives.

Leslie MacLeod

Leslie MacLeod, President/CEO
Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women - NL

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1.0 Organizational Overview

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women was established in 1980 by the Government of the day, and received legislative standing with the introduction of the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*. It was created to advise Government on issues affecting the status of women as well as raise awareness of women's issues within the general public. The Women's Policy Office is responsible for the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*.

The eleven-member Advisory Council is appointed for three-year terms by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. Appointments reflect the regional representation of women with diverse backgrounds and members are eligible for reappointment. The Advisory Council is an arms-length, external agency which reports to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Members of the Advisory Council for 2007-2008 include:

Leslie MacLeod, President/CEO
Phyllis Artiss, Vice-President
Mary Pia Benuen, Sheshatshiu
Jackie Jenkins, Grand Falls-Windsor
Yamuna Kutty, St. John's
Carolyn Lavers, Port au Choix
Vanessa MacArthur, Port aux Basques
Michelle Murdoch, St. John's
Phylis Seymour, Little Bay Islands
Hilda Whelan, Whitbourne

Although one seat is currently vacant, it is scheduled to be filled by a representative from the Inuit women's community. Please see **Appendix B** for biographical information about the Advisory Council and Staff Members.

The President/CEO position is salaried and filled through an open competition. Council Members other than the President/CEO are selected through an open nomination process. Criteria for selection include demonstrated leadership in working to advance the status of women and the ability to work on women's equality issues from a community, regional or provincial perspective.

The Advisory Council works closely with the Women's Policy Office, a branch of Executive Council. The mandate of the Women's Policy Office is to:

a) *develop and expedite Government policies and programs to enhance the social and economic status of women in the province to and ensure that these are communicated to the public;*

b) *ensure that the impact on women of all legislation, policies and programs is brought to the attention of the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and departments;*

c) *monitor and review programs and other activities of government departments to ensure compliance and conformity with the government policy of improving the status of women;*

d) *liaise with provincial government departments and agencies, other governments and advisory councils and women's organizations on all issues affecting women.*

The Advisory Council also works closely and extensively with women, women's groups and other equality-seeking groups which share an agenda to advance women's equality.

All positions within the Advisory Council are currently filled by women. Three full-time staff conduct the every day work of the Advisory Council: President/CEO, Community Liaison/Communications Director and Administrative Assistant.

The office is located in St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador. During 2006-2007, the Advisory Council operated with an annual budget of $297,600.

2.0 Mandate

The mandate of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women is derived from Section 3 of the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*, which states that the Advisory Council shall:

a) *Advise the minister on those matters relating to the status of women that the minister refers to the advisory council for consideration;*

b) *Advise the minister on those matters relating to the status of women that the advisory council feels appropriate;*

c) *Bring before the government and the public matters of interest and concern to women; and*

d) *Establish the general policies that will govern the organization, administration and operation of the advisory council.*

3.0 Lines of Business

Lines of business are defined as those discrete and coherent sets of programs, services and/or products that represent what the Advisory Council provides to its external clients.

In keeping with the Advisory Council's legislated mandate, the following lines of business have been identified: (1) advising Government on issues affecting the status of women; (2) outreach and consultation; and (3) public education and awareness.

3.1 Advising Government on Issues Affecting the Status of Women

The Advisory Council provides advice as requested by the Minister and other Government departments and agencies. On an ongoing basis, the Advisory Council is asked for recommendations on changes to, or the creation of, legislation, policies and practices that will affect the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The work of the Advisory Council is centred on improving Government policies, programs, practices, services, legislation and budget allocations as a means to advance the equality of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Advisory Council also brings emerging issues and concerns to Government. It works with individual women, women's groups, and the Women's Policy Office to identify the issues and develop an analysis of the problems and solutions.

While the Advisory Council is not the direct agent of change, council members provide advice and direction to Government and advocate for systemic changes. Advice is generally provided through position papers, briefs and written recommendations. The Advisory Council identifies processes to move existing policy forward or to deal with gaps. It also engages in issue analysis, research and consultation. The Advisory Council also participates on a variety of committees and working groups related to advancing the status of women.

3.2 Outreach and Consultation

The Advisory Council provides outreach to equality-seeking organizations and to Government by responding to requests for workshops, presentations and speeches on women's experiences, feminist analysis and gender inclusive analysis, insofar as resources permit.

When working on specific issues, the Advisory Council reaches out to stakeholders, clients and others for information and collaboration. It actively engages in networking and consultation with women's groups throughout the Province, as resources allow and as indicated by the strategic priorities.

Much of the Advisory Council's outreach work is done using communications tools such as email, phone, listserv and conference calls. As resources permit,

the Advisory Council hosts and participates in roundtable meetings; brings groups together to facilitate information exchanges; and participates in local, regional and national meetings and conferences.

The Advisory Council also provides outreach to women's equality-seeking groups through participation on boards and advisory committees, such as Women Interested in Successful Employment and the Women in Resource Development Committee.

3.3 Public Education and Awareness

The Advisory Council's third line of business is focussed on providing public education and awareness on issues of women's social, legal, economic, political and cultural equality.

The Advisory Council has developed a strong media presence over the years and uses this media voice to provide information on the status of women, both proactively and reactively. This enables the Advisory Council to regularly provide public feminist reaction and analysis on issues both negatively and positively affecting women's equality and inclusion.

As resources permit, the Advisory Council creates and/or circulates a variety of fact sheets, briefs, reports and other documents related to the status of women.

When requested, and as resources permit, the Advisory Council assists groups with skill development in feminist analysis. These activities are designed to facilitate and assist women in their efforts to develop and present a feminist perspective on equality issues in their communities and regions.

4.0 Values

The values expressed in this plan are intended to reflect the governing values for the operation of the Provincial Advisory Council and the conduct of its staff and council members.

As an equality-seeking organization, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women works from a feminist perspective to advocate for women's full and equal participation in all aspects of society. As the Advisory Council responds to the equality concerns of women in Newfoundland and Labrador, it works to include feminist values in all of its processes, activities and initiatives.

PACSW Values:

Commitment	Each individual applies feminist principles when asserting equality and challenging inequality, thereby affecting social change.
Responsiveness	Each individual responds to requests in a time-efficient manner, meeting the changing needs of the women's community as issues emerge.
Inclusiveness	Each individual works to ensure that all opinions and knowledge are considered so that the strength that exists in the collective voice of women is sustained and enriched by the diversity of women's perspectives.
Learning	Each individual continues to educate herself about women's inequality as a means of fulfilling her responsibility as a feminist leader.
Safety	Each individual contributes to the creation of a respectful environment that ensures women have a safe place to speak openly about inequities.
Celebration	Each individual acknowledges both the challenges and the joys of working with and for women and celebrates our collective achievements.

5.0 Primary Clients

For the purpose of this plan, primary clients are defined as any person, group or organization served by or utilizing the programs, services and/or products offered by the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Within this context, the primary clients of the Advisory Council include: the Minister Responsible for Status of Women, Women's Policy Office, other Government departments and agencies, equality-seeking women's organizations and individuals within the general public seeking information or advocacy on issues related to the advancement of women.

The mandate and goals of the Advisory Council are achieved by working in partnership with all of the identified primary clients.

The Advisory Council is currently an active partner in Government initiatives and strategies such as the Ministerial Committee on Violence Against Women, the 2006-2012 Violence Prevention Initiative and the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

In order to develop sound advice and recommendations, it is critical that the Advisory Council work in partnership with numerous community organizations who share its mandate to advance women's equality. These include: the Status of Women Councils/Women's Centres, shelters, transition houses, and Regional Coordinating Committees against Violence.

The Advisory Council also works with provincial organizations, such as the Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, Multi-Cultural Women's Organization of NL, Women Interested in Successful Employment and the Women in Resource Development Committee.

In addition to our primary clients, the Advisory Council has a number of additional stakeholders, including other equality-seeking organizations and coalitions, the Provincial/Territorial Coalition of Advisory Councils, and the local Status of Women Canada office.

6.0 Vision

The vision of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women is equality, equity and inclusion for women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

7.0 Mission

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women for the two planning cycles of 2007-2008 and 2008-2011.

This plan identifies the measures and indicators that will assist both the Council and the public in monitoring and evaluating progress during the 2007-2008 planning cycle.

The mission statement also represents the Advisory Council's work to move forward on the strategic priority areas identified by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and complements the work of its internal government counterpart, the Women's Policy Office. Government's current strategic issues related to advancing the status of women are outlined in **Appendix A**.

Mission: By March 31, 2011, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have enhanced its representation in priority areas related to advancing the status of women.

Measure: Enhanced representation in priority areas relating to advancing the status of women

Indicators:

- Increased representation in the strategic priorities of Government, including, but not limited to:
  - The Poverty Reduction Strategy
  - The Violence Prevention Initiative
- Strengthened communications link with Government
- Improved representation of the diversity of women's experiences in communication tools
- Strengthened processes used to identify and bring forward emerging issues from the women's community
- Implementation of a strategic approach to focus public awareness activities

8.0 Governance Issues

In consideration of Government's strategic directions, and the mandate and financial resources of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the following have been identified as priority areas by the council members.

As this is a transitional year for the Advisory Council intended to facilitate the development of a three-year planning cycle for 2008-2011, the goals identified for each issue in this plan reflect the results expected in a one-year time-frame. Measures and indicators are provided for the 2007-08 goals to assist both the Advisory Council and the public in monitoring and evaluating progress.

8.1 Representation on Government Strategic Priorities

In keeping with the Advisory Council's mandate to advise the Minister and Government on issues affecting the status of women, council members will spend 2007-2008 developing and implementing effective communication links with Government to enhance its contribution to the strategic priorities related to advancing the status of women.

During this time-frame, the Advisory Council will strengthen its working relationship with departments involved in strategic priorities related to women's

equity and, in particular, those involved with the Violence Prevention Initiative and the Poverty Reduction Strategy. This process will better enable the Advisory Council to define and refine its longer-term planning for 2008-2011.

Goal: By 2008, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have developed and implemented effective communication links to enhance its contribution to Government strategic priorities related to the advancement of issues affecting the status of women

Measure: Developed and implemented appropriate communication links

Indicators:

- Priority links with Government Departments are identified
- Communication processes are developed
- Scope and number of recommendations submitted to Government departments on strategic priorities, including but not limited to:
  - Violence Prevention Initiative
  - Poverty Reduction Strategy

8.2 Diversity of Women's Experiences

In keeping with its mandate to advise Government and the public on issues affecting the status of women, during 2007-2008, the Advisory Council will focus on enhancing its analytical processes to ensure the diversity of women's experiences is fully incorporated in the development of its recommendations.

While the Advisory Council considers how issues affect the status of women in general, it is imperative that it further enhance the use of feminist integrated analysis to take into account the differing realities of women with disabilities, Aboriginal women, senior women, young women, multicultural women, and other women who experience oppression based on their sex as well as other factors.

This focus will greatly assist the Advisory Council's ability to contribute to the strategic directions of the Minister with regard to gender-based analysis by entities, improving the quality of life for Aboriginal women, developing effective public policy, and demonstrating leadership in women's equity issues.

Goal: By 2008, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have enhanced its analytical processes to ensure that the diversity of women's experiences is effectively incorporated into its recommendations

Measure: Enhanced analytical processes

Indicators:

- Developed sound practices for analytical procedures and consensus decision-making
- Employed communications tools to identify diversities in women's experiences
- Enhanced capacity of the Advisory Council to represent the diversity of women's experiences

8.3 Public Awareness

In keeping with the Advisory Council's mandate to bring before Government and the public issues affecting the status of women, the Advisory Council has identified the strategic issue of public awareness. This focus is in keeping with the strategic direction set forth by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to ensure women share equitably in social and economic benefits.

By developing a strategic approach to focus its public awareness activities, the Advisory Council will effectively contribute to the strategic directions of the Minister by demonstrating leadership and bringing attention to public policy areas such as violence prevention that affect the status of women.

Goal: By March 31, 2008, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of women will have developed a strategic approach to focus public awareness activities.

Measure: Developed a strategic approach

Indicators:

- The development of a Council-approved document outlining, but not limited to:
  - A process for identifying priorities (including criteria)
  - Public awareness strategies

Appendix A - Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one Government entity. These directions are normally communicated by Government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents and other communiqués. The *Transparency and Accountability Act* requires all public bodies, such as the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This will facilitate the integration of planning practices across Government and ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments.

Current Government directions related to advancing the status of women are Women's Equity and Violence. Each strategic direction has an outcome and a number of components or focus areas.

The overall mandate of the Advisory Council is to advise Government on all issues affecting the status of women. As such, it is anticipated that the Advisory Council will address the components of these two broad strategic directions through the day to day work and planning processes in 2007-2008.

Government Strategic Direction #1: Women's Equity

Outcome: Women sharing equitably in social and economic benefits

Components of Strategic Direction: Public policy; leadership; gender-based analysis by entities; quality of life of Aboriginal women; and employment opportunities

Government Strategic Direction #2: Violence

Outcome: Reduction of violence

Components of Strategic Direction: Early prevention and education; Aboriginal women and children; Public awareness and attitudes; and Legislation, policy and services

Appendix B – PACSW Council Members and Staff

On March 6, 2006, Government appointed the 2006-2009 members of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The council members and staff bring a rich diversity of experience and analysis to their work. As a collective, we share a deep commitment to advancing the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

President **Leslie MacLeod** has been involved with numerous equality-seeking organizations and committees, including Women Interested in Successful Employment; the Bay St. George, Gander and St. John's Status of Women Councils; the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities; Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Court Challenges Program of Canada. For the past 25 years, she has based her work on a collaborative philosophy of practice rooted in community development and feminist principles. Leslie is a full-time staff member of the Advisory Council.

Vice-President **Phyllis Artiss** is in her third term on the Advisory Council and has been an active member since 2000. She has also been involved with the St. John's Status of Women Council for many years. A retired Memorial University professor, Phyllis has served on several boards and worked on many projects relating to women's issues and equality, including the Let's Teach About Women project, as well as women's stories of their reproductive health in this province, Pakistan and Indonesia. Her volunteer schedule is so busy it's impossible to believe she's retired. Phyllis and her husband live in St. John's.

Mary Pia Benuen was born and raised in Sheshatshiu, Labrador. Through hard work and many sacrifices, Mary Pia was the first Innu woman to become a nurse. She is a true community leader, involved in health promotion, facilitating workshops and community research. She sits on a number of community advisory groups. Mary Pia volunteers with the Family Resource Centre and is always willing to go that "extra mile" with families who are experiencing hardships, including providing emotional support when suicide or death occur. Mary Pia and her beautiful eleven-year-old daughter live in Sheshatshiu.

Jackie Jenkins is a practicing lawyer in Grand Falls-Windsor. Her legal practice and volunteer work enable her to analyze and address numerous women's equality issues. Jackie's involvements include the South and Central Health Care Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society. Among other issues, she has a keen interest in women's access to justice, education and violence against women and children. Jackie is a proud feminist, constantly balancing family life, work and community commitments.

Yamuna Kutty is the President of the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador. She has also served on the St. John's Status of Women Council, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada. Yamuna is involved with numerous projects and initiatives. She brings critical perspectives about immigrant and refugee women to our work, along with a warm and caring heart. She has an extremely busy volunteer schedule. Yamuna and her family live in St. John's.

Carolyn Lavers is an Economic Development Officer with the provincial Department of Innovation Trade and Rural Development in Port au Choix. She is a small business entrepreneur and worked with the former Women's Enterprise Bureau. Carolyn has served on the boards of several local business development boards and other community agencies. She is also deeply concerned about issues related to violence, rural childcare solutions, women's employment and women in leadership. She brings great dedication and insight to our work. Carolyn lives in Port au Choix.

Vanessa MacArthur is the Regional Coordinator of Family Resource Centres in the Port aux Basques area. She is also President of the Gateway Status of Women Council and has worked with the Women's Centre in previous years. Vanessa works from a grass roots perspective, helping young women with families who have many issues in their lives ranging from childcare and parenting to violence. She is a determined and eloquent advocate for women's equality. She is also a talented singer/songwriter with two new CDs to her credit. Vanessa lives in Port aux Basques with her son.

Michelle Murdoch is a determined feminist who has a disability. She is Chair of the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC), a cross-disability service organization. She recently earned her Master's in Women's Studies from Memorial University. As part of her program, Michelle completed a participatory action research project about women with disabilities and employment. Her interests extend across a broad range of social justice issues, including poverty, employment and education. She is keenly analytical and always ready to ask the important questions. Michelle and her family live in St. John's.

Phyllis Seymour received the Governor General's Persons Case Award in 1998. She is a social worker with a long standing history of involvement with social justice and equality issues. Phyllis is a former administrator of Emmanuel House and is well known for mentoring others involved in critical equality-seeking community work. She is extremely concerned about violence against women and children and is a strong child care advocate. She brings great wisdom and passion to the work of the Advisory Council. Phyllis and her husband live in Little Bay Islands.

Hilda Whelan was recently involved in fighting for women's rights in a case involving surviving spouses and the Worker's Health and Safety Compensation Commission. Hilda solely represented and fought for all widows involved in the case for fifteen years, winning an important victory for women's equality. She is a strong advocate, concerned about a wide variety of issues affecting women, including violence and access to child care. Hilda brings the realities of rural women to the work of the Advisory Council. She is determined to continue to make a difference. Hilda and her family live in Whitbourne.

Additional PACSW Staff

Sandy Abbott joined the Advisory Council as the Administrative Assistant in April 2006. She takes care of the day-to-day work of the office, including organizing meetings and managing the finances. She strives to keep our small but hectic office humming in tune. Her wealth of life experience helps to inform our analysis of the issues facing women in the province. Sandy lives in St. John's with her daughter.

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